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THE
RELIGION

OF

Papists and Presbyterians

K TRULY STATED:

AND THE

UNION

OF

English PROTESTANTS
RECOMMENDED.

IN

A Letter to a CLERGYMAN.

By a CURATE *of the*
CHURCH *of* ENGLAND.

LONDON:

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San Francisco de los Rios



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A
L E T T E R
T O A
C L E R G Y M A N .

Reverend S I R ,



H O' , I confess, I do not
come up to your Heights of
extolling the Establish'd
Constitution and Worship of
the *Church of England*, as per-
fectly Primitive and Aposto-
lical; yet I have not so mean an Opinion of
our Church, as to think with you, that the
Being of the *Church of England* rests upon the
precarious and confus'd Tenet; That *the*
Church of Rome is a True Church. I am per-

suaded, we are Christians upon a much better and stronger Foundation.

YOUR Terms, *True Church*, you say, must not be taken to mean Orthodox Church, because if the Romish were an Orthodox Church, our English Reformation would be schismatical, and all the Propositions in our *Liturgy* and *Articles* and *Homilies*, contrary to Popery, would then be so many Errors, or Heresies of our Religion. Now what is this, but owning that same *True Church* (as you term it) to be in reality False and Heterodox in all the Points of Religion peculiar to it. While you disguise it with a fair Word, which to unwary and unthinking People serves to represent a favourable Character of the Romish Religion.

BUT you seem to think, you have sufficiently explain'd your Sence of the Romish Corruptions of the Christian Religion, and reconcil'd them with the Essence of a *True Church*, by the help of this Comparison: *As a Man may be said to be a true Man, who has the Plague upon him; so may the Church of Rome be a True Church with all the Corruptions which are grafted into it.*

THE Question in our Dispute is this: Whether the Corruptions of the *Romish Religion* be so bad, as to destroy the Claims of
Papists

Papists to their being a *True Church*? And you to clear this up, compare those Things to the *Plague*, which carries in it the Notion of a great Calamity, but implies not the least Degree of Blame: And therefore I deny these Cases to be parallel; and tell you, That your Similitude is nothing to the Purpose. For what if the *Plague*, for which a Man is no ways a Criminal, does not hinder, but he may be still a Man, and a good and true Man in a moral Sence? Is it therefore absurd to suppose that Perjury and Treason do make another Man a false Man and a false Traitor? Tho' after those Crimes, as you say in the other Case, he be still a Man. Suppose then, this be the Thing you drive at, that a Man let it be how it will with him, has still the Essence of a Man; and so a Church how Corrupt soever is still a Church in some Sence; which you care not, and perhaps know not well how to explain: Then I shall desire leave from that nice Conclusion of yours, to conclude again for myself; That *True Man*, and *True Church* with you are Words without Sence. You needed not have taken the trouble of fetching a Similitude to settle a mere identical Proposition; That a Church is a Church, as a Man is a Man.

WELL!

WELL! The *Romanists* are a Body of nominal Christians practising Idolatry, Sacrilege and the most wicked Tyrannies under the Name of the *Catholic Church*. And this Church, if you infer from the *Medium* you alledge to be a true Church in a better Sence, than a convict Traitor at the Gibbet, may be a true Man. That Inference indeed would clear the Cause, you undertake to answer for; but then I must tell you, That Inference is falsly drawn. It is no better than this Fallacy. Some certain Thing does not diminish a Man's moral Integrity, therefore no other Matter whatsoever can do. As if you should say, Weakness of Body does not make a Man a perjur'd Person, therefore conspiring and rising up in open Rebellion, will not make a Number of Men to be Traitors. But your Conclusion and this, stand upon the same irrational Foundation: What agrees to a Case free from criminal Qualities, that agrees likewise to any complicated Crimes and wicked Practices.

To avoid owning this Absurdity, you will not offer to maintain the Corruptions of Christianity among Papists to be no Crimes, to make them truly parallel to your Instance of the Plague, which is undoubtedly no
Crime

Crime at all. No; you may not say that, because I know it is one of your Principles, That wrong Opinions and irregular Practices in Religion are criminal, and deserve to be punish'd in this World. And if that be an universal Truth, it must hold to *Papists*, whom you cannot deny to be erroneous. Besides, by the Account you yourself give of your Comparison, you confess the Corruptions of Popery to be mortal Faults in the Sight of GOD, as deadly to the Soul, as the Plague is to the Body. But I suppose, you as well as I have no Notion, how any Opinions or Practices can be destructive to the Souls of Men, and be free from Blame in the very highest Degree. Or else how do you allow GOD to be Just? You cannot say then, that the Danger in the Way of *Popery*, being proportionate to just Degrees of Blame corresponds to the Plague. Thus much for the Preliminary Illustration.

I COME now to the main Points in Controversy between us, and to give you my Reasons, why I do not agree with you in these three Assertions.

First, THAT the *Romanists* are a True Church.

Secondly,

Secondly, THAT the Religion of *Presbyterians* destroys the being of a *True Church*.

Thirdly, THAT the Religion of *Papists* is preferable to the Religion of *Presbyterians*, less faulty, and less dangerous to Mens Salvation.

ON your first Assertion, That the *Romanists* are a *true Church*: You say, the Validity of our Orders and Sacraments, and with them the Being of the *Church of England* must depend. Because the Succession of our Ordinations was conveyed thro' the *Church of Rome*, and you suppose, that Valid Ordinations must of Necessity be deriv'd thro' a *True Church* by an uninterrupted Succession from the Apostles. By these Altitudes you fly up into the Clouds, and fancy yourself engag'd as a Clergyman of the *Church of England*, to stand to it, that the *Romanists* are

Homil. a *true Church*. Against our *Homilies*, which
Whitsun- positively pronounce the *Romish* to be no
day. true Church, but to be Antichrist. Against
 Peril of Idolatry. one of the *Thirty-nine Articles*, which defines
 Art. 19. the visible CHURCH of CHRIST by Pro-
 Declar. perties, which you yourself must confess the
 at the End *Romish Church* has not. And lastly against
 of the Commu- the
 nion Ser- vice.

the *Liturgy*, which determines the Worship, which the *Romanists* observe, to be idolatrous.

WHEN you have look'd into these Matters, and have seen, that I do not oppose you without Book: It is to be hop'd, you will have a little Patience, while I examine your Suppositions, or as you call them *Church-Principles*. 1. That valid Ordinations must of Necessity be convey'd thro' a *True Church*. 2. By an uninterrupted Succession from the Apostles.

First, YOU hold it for a certain Church-Principle, That valid Ordinations must of Necessity be convey'd thro' a *True Church*, Not that you conceive a collective Body of Christian People, answering the Definition of the CHURCH, to be the Conveyers of Orders: Or, that the Church, properly speaking, confers Orders; though you assert the Constitution of a *True Church* to be essential to the Validity of Orders. For you maintain the Power and Office of Ordaining to be appropriated to Bishops only. But then, Bishops you say, they must be of a *True Church*. Why! Does the Power or Right of a Bishop depend upon the Soundness of other Mens Faith and Manners! If

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you mean no such Thing; what signifies the Restriction, That he must be of a *True Church*; or belong to a good Body of Christian People?

IT is possible, a Community may be heterodox and unchristian, and their Bishop be upright in his Faith and Manners. And shall his Office cease to all Purposes for the Follies and Misdemeanors of other Men, which perhaps he cannot prevent? Nay, suppose a Bishop himself guilty of the personal Crimes of Heresy and Idolatry, for which he no longer deserves to bear the sacred Character of a Christian: Yet the Offices of such a Man may be nevertheless valid and beneficial to all other Persons, who are qualify'd for Orders, or the Sacraments, though these are receiv'd from such ill Hands. The Unworthiness of the Ordainer, puts not a Stop to the Benefits of Christianity to other Men, unless it be just, to make one Man's personal Faults become infinitely prejudicial to other Men, who may abhor those Faults, and reform a great Part of the World from them.

BUT if the Romish Bishops be not Members of a *True Church*, you will say, they are really no Bishops; and consequently, that all Ordinations by them are absolutely null. Well! I shall ask you then to answer for the
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the Fact; That Men may practise and enjoin Idolatry, deface the Worship of GOD with numberless Follies and Superstitions, deprive People of the Scripture, and frame a Scheme of Ignorance and Contradiction, destructive of Christianity, and be true Members of the Christian Church. If it be not past your Skill, make all this out. But then tell me, Why the Heathens are without Excuse, *who changed the Truth of GOD into a Lye, and worshipped and served the Creature, more than the Creator*; and *Papists*, notwithstanding the like Deeds, shall be the *True Church* of GOD. All the Matter is, Our Orders in the *Church of England* were convey'd from *Papists*; and it is your Speculation, That valid Orders must be deriv'd from Bishops of a *True Church*. But Experience and History confute you, that it neither was, nor could be so with Us.

I MIGHT answer you at once, That your high Opinion of uninterrupted Succession, is groundless, a mere Hypothesis of Mens Invention; because I do not find, that GOD has declar'd it to be essential to the Being and Preservation of the Christian Church; and I would know then, how you can affirm it to be so, having not any Warrant from GOD to decree any such Matter!

BUT I will try to take off the Conse-

quence, you pretend to be inevitable from the Denial of the splendid Title of *True Church* to *Papists*, though their Bishops were the Ordainers of our first Reformers; supposing true Succession to be the regular Way of Ordinations, and as such to be observ'd, where it can be follow'd.

NECESSITY in the Course of God's Providence brought our Ordinations through the corrupt Chancel of the Romish Communion: But *Necessity* makes up all Defects whatsoever which arise from it.

YOU will not deny, that the Orders of our Reformers were receiv'd from Romish Bishops by *Necessity*, when you consider, how the Corruptions of *Popery* had prevail'd over these Parts of the World, and that the Romish Bishops not only kept up the Claims of being the Apostles true Successors, but were possess'd of all Power, excepting the Power of Truth, to maintain that good Title and carry on all Ecclesiastical Offices, with a high Hand in their own Way. Consider beside, that our Reformers were bred up in those Opinions, and implicitly followed them, with other People, before Examination. But on the contrary, had our Reformers seen the enormous Faults of *Popery* sooner, and been of your Mind, that valid Orders

Orders stand upon uninterrupted Succession in a *True Church*; what Possibility was there for them to have been ordain'd by Bishops according to that Scheme. Where were such to be found for our Fore-fathers! Or by what Marks and Rules could they have been satisfy'd at last, if they had set themselves about it, that there had never been a Flaw or a Failure, not one Forgery or heterodox Incapacity where they should have applied themselves. After all it was impossible for them to know, where your imaginary Succession of true Bishops could be met with, if such a Thing be in the World. And what Choice had they, when they knew not how, and had not Power to help effectually, what they did? And therefore wisely contented themselves, that GOD would require no more of them, than what was in their Power, Faithfulness to the sacred Obligations, which the Word of GOD lays upon Christian Ministers, whatever others had done before them.

I ADD, That *Necessity* makes up any such Defect, as can be conceiv'd in the present Case; It is granted by all the World to a Proverb, *Necessity has no Law*, no Precept, no Right can take Place against it. Suppose then there was a Deficiency in the Course
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of our Orders, the *Romish Church* being Antichristian and that this Deficiency should not have been admitted, if it could have been avoided: But since it was unavoidable, it is for that Reason unblameable and none of us can be the worse for it. There was the very same Exception against the Validity of Baptism by Hereticks, that they were Antichristian Ministers, and yet that was granted by the Fathers to be good. If you are for the Negative, this at least will follow, That the invalid Baptisms left a Chasm in the Christian Church, and broke the Succession. But then again, you run into this cruel and unjust Determination, That, *not only the Infidelity or Wickedness of a Man's own Soul; but those Qualities in another, can debar him of the Mercies of Christianity.* Which is judging a Man punishable and liable to perish on another Man's Account, without supposing him under a Personal Incapacity to be made a Christian. Granting then, that Baptism and Orders ought not to be taken upon Choice from Antichristian Bishops and Priests; yet a Thing that ought not to be done, may stand good, when it is done. You will have a Notion of this from an Instance, Suppose an ignorant and immoral Man be ordain'd a Priest, you must own, that

that that ought not to have been done; yet you will hardly deny, but his Orders shall afterward stand good.

Secondly, AGAINST your strong Opinion of a secret mysterious Force belonging to successive Orders, I argue, That the Business or Commission for Ordaining is only ministerial from a divine Appointment, that Christianity shall be taught and professed to the End of the World. And this shews the weakness of your Reasoning from the little Maxim, *Nothing gives, what it has not*; to prove, that Ordainers must have the Titles and Offices in themselves, which their Ministry confirms to others. As if Orders were Gifts and Communications of an inherent Efficacy in the Ordainer: Whereas it is GOD's Appointment which obliges us to spiritual Duties, it is not the Bishops who gives the spiritual Right, Character or Authority, call it, what you will. But now if it be necessary, that an officiating Person should have actually in himself the Right and Qualification, which his Ministry can convey to others; how comes it to pass, that *Matrimony* is celebrated very often with us, and always in the Romish Church by unmarried Priests! Yet no Body, that I know of, ever
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pretended to question the Validity of such Marriages upon your philosophical Maxim, That, *Nothing gives what it has not.* And I believe, you will find it hard to assign a good Reason, Why it must hold conclusive in the Case of Orders, and the Maxim signify nothing at all in another sacred Performance.

AGAINST your Opinion of uninterrupted Succession I argue farther, That it makes the Validity of any Man's Orders absolutely uncertain. For a Man is not validly ordained, according to that, if one Link of the *Chain* of Bishops between the Apostles and him, has happen'd to fail. When the *Chain*, as you call it, is broken, you imagin, the Man at the End of it, falls to the Ground, and is but a Layman ; and all that hang upon him, whether Bishops, Priests or Deacons, are Laymen still, and their Orders, and Sacraments *in infinitum* null. But can you take it upon you, that there has never been an Atheist or Heretick in the Office of a Bishop since the Beginning of the Christian Church ! And such to be sure, were no true Bishops of CHRIST'S CHURCH. And if the Frauds and common Forgeries of the Romish Hierarchy gives you no manner of Uneasiness to fear such a Thing has too often happen'd amongst them ; yet it is more than you know,

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or any other Clergyman alive can ever prove, that there has been no such Interlopers in your or his Line of Descent from the Apostles, and consequently, no Man of us all can know, upon your Grounds, whether we are validly ordain'd Priests, and have rightfully taken upon us the Care of Souls. So that your Opinion of your uninterrupted Succession, leaves the Validity of any Man's Orders uncertain.

AND methinks, you should depart from your Assurance, That the *Romanists* of all People have preserv'd the uninterrupted Succession, when you are reminded, that their Church permits Women, without Episcopal Ordination, to baptize Infants; and did never require those who receiv'd the Sacrament of Baptism by Midwives, to be rebaptiz'd by Persons Episcopally ordain'd, if they have accidentally liv'd to go into Orders. And so have given up that Succession, which you assert to have been inviolably maintain'd by 'em. For it is an Article of your Faith, *That Episcopal Ministers alone can baptize so as to make Christians*. But to this Case, I understand, you have a ready Reply, That Episcopal Orders are a Remedy to recover a Christian to Life out of the dead State of Lay-Baptism. I will make no other Observation upon that idle Fetch, but that it leaves a full Confession,

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that Episcopal Baptism itself, is not indeed essential to the Being of a Christian.

YOU have now seen my Reasons, why I think it signifies little to us and the rest of the Christian World, whether *Papists* be a *True Church* or not. And if your Tenderness for the Reputation of *Popery* be honestly meant, I cannot help saying, that it is not overwise to fix your Salvation and all your Hopes from Christianity upon a Supposition of uninterrupted Succession of true Bishops in the popish Way, of which you have no probable Proof; besides, that the Romish Faith and Worship, after all, are unanswerably contrary to the Faith and Worship of true Christians.

WHAT if they profess in Words to believe the whole Christian Revelation; they believe it with that Inconsistency, which brings it to the same pass, as if they acknowledg'd little or nothing of the Matter. I need not argue only, That they have blended GOD'S Revelation with many false and unjustifiable Imaginations of Men; That they have departed far from the Worship of true Christians, by their daily Services to other Mediators to the GOD and FATHER of our Lord JESUS CHRIST beside him: By Inventions of miraculous Images; by idolatrous Adorations of the Host, by mutilating the Lord's-Supper,

Supper, and transforming the glorious Design of the Christian Religion into a Scene of Priestcraft, and detestable Pageantry: But I might argue from the Cardinal Principle of *Popery*, the Necessity of implicate Faith in their Church, that their Religion is impious from the very Foundation; that it makes the reveal'd Will of GOD a mere State, that it subjects the Force of GOD's Laws, and Terms of Salvation, to the Power of their Church: As appears from their practising Indulgences, Pardons and Dispensations. And upon their vain and exorbitant Pretension to Infallibility, they have proceeded to prohibit the vulgar Use of GOD's Word; which is a depriving their People of the best Means of Salvation upon Earth. Without which Act, their Profession of Christianity could not continue in that sad State it is in.

IN a Word: I remind you, That the infallible Truth of Holy Scripture, is an *unquestionable Principle between us*; and by that I challenge you to prove, that the Religion of the *Romanists*, is the Religion of a true Christian Church. I proceed to your

Second Proposition, THAT the Religion of Presbyterians destroys the Being of a true Church. By which, you say, you mean nothing less, than

that they are no Christians: Holding from *Dodwell*, and some other profound *Performers* in *Divinity*, That Episcopacy is essential to Christianity; and that the *Immortalizing Spirit*, as they express it, is confin'd to Episcopal Ministers, is their Privilege, and theirs only. A glorious Grant to us! And a dismal Way with Dissenters; they must all be conjur'd down for ever. Only they will be apt to take one Thought for Comfort, That the most violent Bitterness, makes not the least Proof; and that you, and the Men of your Spirit, are liable to be mistaken in this Judgment, as well as you have, to your great Regret, reckon'd wrong in other Matters.

You must not presently conclude in your haste, That I am against the Office of Bishops, because you perceive, I do not strain it to your Height. No! I assure you, I am entirely satisfy'd in the Government of our Church by Bishops. Believing the Superiority of Bishops to be countenanc'd by a known Form of Church-Government in *St. Paul's* Time, and therefore not unlawful; believing the Trust of conferring Orders to be in their Hands by long Prescription without any necessary Inconveniencies, and as it is a Part of our Constitution in the Legislature as well as the Church, I am for adhering

to it, to avoid infinite Confusions, not seeing that the external Order, Peace and Regularity of the Christian Ministry is like to be better, or so well secur'd by any other assignable Form of Church-Government in this Nation. For these Persuasions, I think, I have good Grounds. But your much more sublime Notions of Episcopacy, I am persuaded, neither you nor any Man else can prove, that it is of *immutable divine Right*; that it is essential to the Administration of the Christian Sacraments.

IF Episcopacy be of *immutable divine Right*, it is so, either by the Evidence of right Reason which is the Voice of GOD, or by Virtue of a positive Appointment in GOD's reveal'd Will.

BUT upon the Supposition, That Christianity is the only true Religion, and that there is a Necessity of having some Men always set apart to the peculiar Employment and Charge of ministering in holy Offices, and of Teaching and Inculcating the Obligations and Duties of GOD's true Religion; the Principles of Reason dictate nothing more, than that such Persons ought to be fit to answer those great Ends, and be faithful in their Professions. But their Titles, their Distinctions, their Subordinations among them-

themselves, or who should from Time to Time select and appoint fit Persons to enter upon the Office of ministring publickly in Religion, whether Magistrates, the Choice of the Congregations, or Ecclesiasticks only, the Principles of Reason do not particularly determine. So that all these Circumstances are left in the Condition of mutable and indifferent Things by the Law of Nature.

SINCE then, Episcopacy can be no more than a positive Institution: I ask you to shew the *express Precept* in Scripture, by which it is become an Institution of *divine Right*. If you refuse to alledge that decisive Proof, and deny that an *express Precept* from GOD is necessary to determine a Matter of this Nature, because you may be conscious, you cannot find an *express Precept*, that Bishops, a superior Order above Presbyters, only shall ordain in the Christian Church. I hope, you will think yourself bound to produce Evidence of divine Authority equivalent to a *Precept* from GOD, that so the Form of the Christian Church shall be.

WHEN you argue, That our Saviour in constituting the Apostles, constituted the superior Order of Bishops, I am sure, you will not maintain, that Bishops have the full and entire Power of Apostles; for then Bishops

shops by their Office should have Authority to decree Matters of Faith, and to do all Things in the Direction and Government of the Church, which the Apostles did. But that is absurd, because Bishops evidently want Infallibility, and the Power of Discerning of Spirits, which qualified the Apostles to decree Matters of Faith and unerring Censures. According to those eminent Promises of our Saviour to them, before their Commission of Apostles took Place. *Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven. Whosoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retain'd.* But without the Spirit of the Apostles, those high and distinguishing Acts of their Office cannot be perform'd. And therefore were peculiar to them: And have ceased, because no Man is now sufficient for those Things.

Matthew,
xviii. 18.

Joh. xx.
23.

NOR farther is it evidently certain, That the Apostolical Authority implying Superiority and Jurisdiction over Presbyters was not an extraordinary Power in them answerable to their extraordinary Abilities for Planting the CHURCH of CHRIST. In which supernatural Abilities Bishops do not appear to be their Successors, nor therefore does the Power

Power the Apostles might have by Virtue of their supernatural Abilities, appear to belong to them in Right of Succession to the Apostles.

NOR again, can you conclude, That the superior Power of the Apostles, prescribes the unchangeable Plan and Constitution of the Christian Church for all Ages; since the Scripture has no where said so much, that it should do so. And the Fact alone, that the Apostles had such a Power, does not determine it to be the unchangeable Constitution of the Christian Church: For then Infallibility, and the Power of Miracles, should belong to the Constitution of the Christian Church. And the Pope, as extravagant as he appears in pretending to an infallible Power, comes up the highest of all Men in the World to the Apostolical Plan and Model.

Lastly, By the Account St. Paul has left of our SAVIOUR's establishing his Church, I am satisfy'd, that an unchangeable Model of Church Government cannot be inferr'd from the Power or Offices, which took place in the Beginning of the Christian Church. He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers. All these Offices our Saviour CHRIST appointed for the Establishing his CHURCH: But all these

Eph. iv.
11.

these were not of perpetual Continuance, some of them have ceas'd; therefore the Supposition of some certain *Power* or *Office* having been appointed by our Saviour for the first Establishment of the Christian Church, fixes not an unchangeable Prescription for the Preservation of the Christian Church. Upon the Whole, The CHURCH of CHRIST was establish'd by Persons of extraordinary Commissions; and sacred Ministers are, and will always be necessary to keep up Christianity in the World: Yet since GOD has not prescrib'd the particular Order of Episcopacy, I conclude, that it does not appear to be by divine Right necessary to keep up Christianity in the World.

YOUR next Argument is form'd from the Act of St. *Paul* in appointing *Timothy* and *Titus* Bishops of *Ephesus* and *Crete*; which, you say, puts the divine Right of Episcopacy out of dispute. But that indeed is not clear to me, because it is an undetermin'd Point, Whether they were only Bishops, and not Evangelists; the extraordinary Occasions of those Churches requiring their extraordinary Assistance and Directions? But if it were undeniable, that *Timothy* and *Titus* were only ordinary Bishops of St. *Paul*'s making, how will you prove that he invested them in the Superiority

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rity and Dignity of ordinary Bishops on the Principle of the *Necessity* of that one Form of Church-Government in all Places, and thro' all Ages. The Apostle has not in Words declar'd that.

IF you say, An Apostolical Act in itself is enough to fix an unchangeable Prescription, and raise an Office or Custom to be of divine Right. How will you then justify your own Ministry, or the Constitution of the *Church of England*, in several Instances? It was an Apostolical Custom to anoint the Sick with Oyl; and see *St. James*, v. 14. if there was not an Apostolical Order for observing that Custom? But I know you do not anoint the Sick with Oyl, now it is seen, it will not work the Miracle of Healing, as it did in the the Times of the Apostles. Again, Love-Feasts, and the Kifs of Charity, had the Authority of Apostolical Practice. And if you are persuaded, that an Apostolical Act makes a perpetual Law to the Christian Church, how come you to disuse those Customs in our Church? Again, If the Apostolical Appointment of an Office, makes it of divine Right, what becomes of the *Church of England* for leaving out of its Constitution the Office of Widows or Deaconesses? which appears to have been an Office of Apostolical
Appoint-

Appointment. *St. Paul* commands that Widows be honour'd, and recounts the Qualifications for that Title and Degree, as he does elsewhere those that should belong to Bishops or Presbyters: And we know the Order of such Widows was kept up in the Christian Church for some Ages. Granting then that the Apostles did in fact appoint a superior Order above Presbyters, that will no more conclude now the necessity and divine Right of such a superior Order, than good old Women can alledge for a sacred Office peculiar to themselves. But that for saving the Honour of the *Church of England*, I believe, you will freely own to be superseded, since the Christian Church is come into other Circumstances, and the Office of Widows is not now of Use, as it was in the Primitive Times. If you assert still, that the Apostolical Appointment of Bishops nevertheless stands in Force, because their Office is not liable to the Exception of being wholly useless. I observe, that then you give up Apostolical Appointment, as not sufficient in and by itself, to make an Office of perpetual Obligation, unless it is recommended by it's own Usefulness. Which in short is no more than saying; that the Settlement of Bishops is to be kept up, because it is useful.

But then you come over to my Opinion of Episcopacy, and resolve it at last into a very different Consideration from a Matter of divine Right by strict Apostolical Appointment.

AFTER all, The Scripture, which is the only determinate Evidence of such a Matter, has left it dubious, to be made out, if it be to be done at all by Guesses, and very remote Consequences. And from thence I shall prove, that Episcopacy is not essential to the Administration of the Christian Sacraments, and to a State of Salvation. No; not tho' it were true, that *that* Order was really of *divine Right*; it might be utterly false, that it is of that vast Importance.

FOR all Things which are universally necessary to Salvation are fully and clearly determin'd in Scripture. And on the other side, all Things which are but dubiously expressed or indefinitely mention'd in Scripture, are for that Reason not necessary to be either explicitly believ'd, or universally observed to Salvation. But the Scripture has no where defin'd the absolute Distinction between Bishops and Presbyters, has no where said, that a Distinction between them shall be perpetually kept up. But quite otherwise in several Places of Scripture, the Titles of
Bishops

Bishops and Presbyters are mentioned as perfectly equivalent. You shall see some Instances. *Acts xx. ver. 17. the Elders of the Church,* are in *ver. 28. styled, Overseers, 'Επισκοποι, Bishops.* *Philip. i. 1. Paul and Timotheus the Servants of Jesus Christ, to all the Saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons.* The Bishops there, are generally suppos'd to have been only Elders, because a Plurality of Bishops in one City, seems not to sound right with the State of Episcopacy, which is now contended for. *Tit. i. 7. we read, That a Bishop must be blameless.* But looking back to the *ver. 5. it is evident, St. Paul is only giving the Character of an Elder.* These and other Passages of Scripture manifestly shew the Distinction between Bishops and Presbyters to be ambiguous. And from thence I infer, that it is not an essential Matter of Christianity universally necessary to Salvation.

IF, to conclude this Controversy, instead of producing a clear Account from Holy Scripture of the divine Right of Episcopacy, you should think of mustering up Quotations from the Fathers and Councils, the usual retreat at a *moot Point.* I think it fair to tell you beforehand, That the Opinions of Fathers, and Decrees of Councils, will by

no means pass for Proof of an essential Matter of Christianity ; unless you will be sure to prove withal, that the Consent of Fathers and Councils amount to infallible Evidence, and that the Essence of Christianity must be what they, not what the Holy Scriptures make it.

BUT if you agree, That the Scriptures contain *all Things necessary to Salvation*, so as to determine and fix every Thing clearly and plainly, which is of that Consequence. I cannot conceive, but upon a full and impartial Review, you must see Cause to yield your Notions of Episcopacy to be no better than the Effects of Prepossession and narrow Bigotry. As I take your Way of contending for Episcopacy to be of ill Consequence, to alienate almost all other reform'd Churches from the *Church of England* ; so I see no Warrant, the *Church of England* has to unchristian and anathematize other Nations ; because they have not receiv'd the same external Form of Church-Government, which we have. Since it is a Thing of which God has not pronounc'd one Way or other, that it is either necessary to, or destructive of Salvation.

I AM satisfy'd, we can defend the Superiority of Bishops to be lawful in itself, and

to be sufficient and convenient for all the good Ends of Church-Government: And those Considerations will Vindicate the National Establishment of Bishops in our Church to be good, if any hot and narrow-spirited Men of the *Presbyterian* Persuasion would strive in their turn to return *Railing for Railing*, and to shew themselves as rash and unmerciful to us, as you are to them.

THUS I have answer'd the Reasons, upon which you pronounce most of the reform'd Churches to be no Christians; not only because it is a groundless and extravagant Determination, but because I have long observ'd the ill Use, the Jacobite Faction in this Nation make of the high Opinion of Episcopacy, you espouse, to preposses willing Believers of that Tenet, with all the Rancour and Bitterness against the *Protestant Royal FAMILY*, which the fiercest *Papists* can express against Hereticks. I Proceed now to your,

Third Proposition, THAT the Religion of Papists is preferable to the Religion of Presbyterians, less faulty and less dangerous to Men's Salvation. A Paradox the hopeful Prospect of the Popish Pretender made Current, but in Truth more like the Faith of an *Irish Tory*,
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than of a Clergyman of the *Church of England*, invented and put about to stupify peoples just Dread and Aversion to the Corruptions of Popery; and to the Shame and Reproach of all common Sense in a Protestant Nation, all the World saw it take strangely: But all that Mischief still proceeded from a blind Confidence, that that goodly Profession is made only in Honour to the *Church of England*, as having a nearer Affinity and Resemblance to the Religion of *Papists* than of the *Presbyterians*.

Now to convince you of the scandalous Ignorance of laying this wild Concession in Favour of Popery, to *Church of England* Principles. I will compare the chief Points in difference between the *Church of England* and *Presbyterians*, with the State of Popery under the same Heads; and shew you that there is no real Agreement between *Papists* and us in those Respects, and that we and *Presbyterians* equally disagree from them in many fundamental Points of the Christian Religion.

First, *Presbyterians* differ from us by laying aside the Distinction between Bishops and Presbyters, and Episcopacy, it's true, is no Controversy between our Church and *Papists*,
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pists. But this I have shewn to be no essential Constitution of Christianity. Make what you can of it; it is but an external Circumstance of Church-Government, with which, Truth or Falshood, the Purity or Depravation of Christianity may accidentally be promoted, as much as without it.

IF in keeping up a Distinction between Bishops and Presbyters, you can say, the *Romanists* have done one Thing right; yet by the Powers and Practices they have annexed to those Offices, I am sure, they have done more excessively ill. For though I should grant, that the proper Offices stand among them, yet those Offices, you know, are neither discharg'd in Preaching or Reading God's true Word to the People, nor administering the two Christian Sacraments rightly, nor Praying publickly in an intelligible Way. Besides, by the presumptuous Claims of their Clergy (which are always bringing them in vast Profits from the Laity) to receive Confessions of Sins against God, and to absolve them authoritatively in the Name of G O D, (*who only is able to save and to destroy*), they invade the Prerogative of G O D, and make their Offices destructive of that *Holiness* of Life, without which the Scripture tells us, *no Man shall see the Lord*.

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HERE is then the State of the Difference; The *Romanists* have the Offices of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, as the *Church of England* has. But with them the *Romanists* put quite another Scheme of Religion, and turn them to the vilest Abuses of keeping People in Ignorance of Christianity, and supporting them in Wickedness. Whereas *Presbyterians* do indeed deny the Distinction between Bishops and Presbyters; let that be wrong; yet it is certainly right, and good, and honest in their Ministers, that they make it their Principle to press and teach the Obligations of the Christian Covenant, as it is prescrib'd in Scripture, and in that fundamental Point, in the great End of the Christian Ministry, they fully agree with us.

Secondly, ANOTHER Matter of Distinction between our *Establish'd Religion* and that of *Presbyterians*, is, That they use not a standing *Liturgy*, as we do. And in that Respect again, you may perhaps tell People, that the *Papists* are nearer to us, because truly they use prescrib'd Forms of Prayer. But what Forms! Sinful and Idolatrous in the Matter they contain; absurd and irrational in the Manner of delivering them in their publick Congregations always in *Latin*. Their Prayers to the *Virgin Mary*, and the Souls of departed

parted Saints, are essentially different from the *Church of England* Worship. And the Corruption of their Communion is so much the worse, as their Forms establish and appoint Idolatry to be an unavoidable Part of their daily Service to all that understand it.

WHAT if we have some similar or some of the same Expressions in our *Common-Prayer*, which are to be found in the *Mass-Book*, by renouncing the Use of all Prayers and Invocations to Saints, we reject the Prescriptions of their religious Offices, and the greatest Part of their Prayers; and our praying to God alone, is absolutely a different Frame of Devotion from the Romish. Beside, the greatest Part of our daily Service is employ'd in Reading holy Scripture in the Vulgar Language for the Edification of the People, and all our compos'd Prayers were for the same Reason put into those plain Expressions, which are easy to be understood, and as we think, suitable to judicious Piety to God. But Edification and judicious Piety are absolutely defeated and set aside in the Romish Communion, wherein all publick Devotion is perform'd in a Language the People do not understand. So that neither the Matter, nor the Design of the *Romish Liturgy*, can with Truth be said to agree with ours.

PuT the Case now, That *Presbyterians* cannot answer for it, that the Petitions of their *extempore* Prayers are alway correct and judicious; is not an unknown Tongue, a greater Disadvantage to the Devotion of the People in the Romish Communion? Or, against injudicious Expressions in Prayers to GOD, are not blasphemous and idolatrous Addresses to Saints, a worse Thing on the other Side, and a higher Indignity to GOD? You will not, I believe, be for carrying the Benefits of a *Liturgy* so far, as to say, that Christian Worship cannot be perform'd without a prescrib'd *Liturgy*; for then you'll condemn the Episcopal People of *Scotland*, who have not generally us'd a stated *Liturgy*. But your Parry will not be forward to unchurch them, because you know very well, that the Episcopal *Scots* have the prime leading Principles proper to right *High-Church*, that is, implacable Hatred to the *Revolution*, and all possible Disloyalty to the *Protestant Succession*.

Thirdly, ANOTHER Distinction between Us and *Presbyterians*, is, that they lay aside Ceremonies of Human Appointment in their religious Worship: And our Church professes to enjoyn some Things of that sort, not under the Notion of essential Parts of Religion, but as indifferent Things, innocent in themselves,

selves, order'd to be observed solely for the sake of Decency and Réverence in the Service of GOD. And since our Church holds, that human Authority ought not to enjoin Superstitious and Idolatrous Ceremonies, and pronounces some of the Romish to be such: How can you pretend, that the Credit of the *Church of England* engages you to give the Advantage on the Side of *Poper*y? Suppose, our Church is in the middle Way between Superstitious Ceremonies and none at all. When the Obligation of our Ecclesiastical Rites, which were in themselves indifferent Things, arises entirely from positive Laws. So that where there are no Laws prescribing such Things, the non-observance of 'em is indifferent and innocent. And Consequently by *Church of England* Principles, such Ceremonies as we ourselves observe are not obligatory, where Laws do not prescribe 'em. And all the Charge you can prove against *Presbyterians* under this Head, extends no farther than to those of our own Nation. If you fix upon this Reason, to maintain it to be better to be an English *Papist*, than an English *Presbyterian*, you will not be able to deny, that the Neglect of our Church Ceremonies lies equally against both, and leaves no Room for the Preference, you assert

sert on the Romish Side. This Thought leads me to remind you of your strange Partiality to our English *Papists* and *Non-jurors*, that you never give them the Name of Schismatics for their Separation from the Establish'd Church, while that Offence is pronounc'd by you to be damnable in dissenting Protestants.

To return, the greatest Indecency you chuse to instance against *Presbyterians* in Point of Ceremonies, is standing in their Prayers, and sitting at the Lord's Supper. But suppose the humble Posture of kneeling more becoming us at those Duties. Standing in Prayer to GOD, is not so heinously sinful, as giving away GOD's Honour to Creatures. And the *Papists* administering only the Wafer in the Communion to the People, is certainly a greater Violation of the sacred Institution of the Lord's Supper, than taking the whole Sacrament under both Species of Bread and Wine, as our Saviour commanded it, tho' without the most becoming Posture of the Body, which is a Rite of human Appointment only. You cannot say, that they that receive only Half of the Lord's Supper, do fulfil CHRIST's express Institution of that Sacrament. Or that they who sit at it do commit a Thing at the same Time, which he has forbidden.

I HAVE

I HAVE gone over the Particulars, where-
in there is some Appearance of Resemblance
between our Church and that of *Papists* :
And shewn you, that these will not bear you
out, to pronounce *Popery* to be preferable to
the Religion of *Presbyterians* in those very
Respects. And now I shall desire you to con-
sider, that the *Church of England* and *Presby-*
terians, equally disagree from *Papists* in many
fundamental Points of the Christian Religion.

First, PRESBYTERIANS are perfectly agreed
with us, in adhering to the same Foundati-
on of Religion ; That the Holy Scripture is
the Rule of FAITH ; and that That contains
all Things necessary to Salvation. Whereas
Popery, instead of admitting the Perfection
of the Scripture, pretends to stand upon the
infallible Authority of the visible Church,
and makes it an Article of Faith, That Oral
Traditions are necessary both to make up the
Defects of GOD's Word, and are to be re-
ceived under Pain of Damnation, with all
the Regard due to divine Truths.

Secondly, IT is a common Principle of
Protestants, That the Scripture is of Right to
be of general Use. Whereas *Popery* restrains
that glorious Happiness from the People.

Thirdly, IT is an agreed Principle among
Protestants, That GOD alone is to be wor-
shipped,

shipped, and that Idolatry is a mortal Sin. Whereas *Popery* allows Prostrations to Images, enjoyns Adorations to little Wafers, practises Invocations to departed Souls; and all these so notoriously, that the popish Guides are not able to look the second Commandment in the Face, as appears by their leaving it out of their Catechisms.

Fourthly, PROTESTANTS are unanimous, That our Lord JESUS CHRIST, is the only Mediator, between GOD and Man, and that there is no other Name, whereby we can be saved; but only the Name of the Son of GOD. Whereas *Popery* directs Men to seek to Saints and Angels, as Mediators to GOD for Grace, and Mercy, and eternal Life; and has devis'd an imaginary Stock of Merit, and Supernumerary Graces from the Saints, which raises them in the Esteem of their Votaries, to the Honour, which only belongs to the SAVIOUR of the World.

Lastly, PRESBYTERIANS disbelieve no one Thing, that is truly an Article of Faith with us; but resolve their Salvation into the same Terms and Conditions, which we acknowledge to be necessary to everlasting Life. In the main Points of Religion, they believe and teach as we do. Though the Circumstantials of Church Governours, and other
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By-Distinctions, be not compromis'd between us. But those are dubious Matters, which GOD has not decided, however Oppositions, Heats, and Party Designs of Men have engag'd both Sides perhaps to over-value them.

BUT if these have been irreconcilable Breaches too long, it is to be hop'd *Protestants* will in Time be better united upon their Agreement in the main Points of their common Faith, and see the happy Advantages of mutual Forbearance, and amicable Concessions in other Matters. Unless we must alway take Counsel of our Enemies, and do them the Pleasure of continuing our Divisions, which of all Things, they would be glad to encourage, and have kept up among us, as the necessary Means, by which only they can expect to compass their last Design, and ruin us.

DELUDE yourself, as you will; you cannot deny, that the Romish Religion makes it a Principle of Piety and Conscience to destroy *Protestants* as Hereticks. And Experience has shewn us of this Nation, that neither Generosity nor Gratitude, nor Oaths nor Promises, can be Security, so much as for the Tools, who give up a *Protestant* Kingdom to the Discretion and Mercy of *Papists*. And upon this Reflection I leave you to consider, If the popish *Pretender's* Aims had succeeded,

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how little better you must have far'd under the irresistible Power of *Popery*, if at last you would have gone no farther, than you would be thought to do now ; that is confessing *Popery* to be only the next best Religion to that of the reform'd *Church of England*.

I HAVE made good my Promise of sending you my Thoughts upon the Propositions in your late Letter, and shall be in Expectation of your Answer, whether you think, after this, your Opinions to be justifiable or not. I am

Yours, &c.

P O S T S C R I P T.

IN the mean Time I add, that all others among Us, who truly Value the Interest and Preservation of the Protestant Establishment, have Reason to take warning from the dangerous Condition the Height of our Divisions have lately brought us into, and to think seriously of composing them.

OUR Church professes, that the Appointment of human Ceremonies in our Communion, does not proceed from mere Will and Pleasure, but that they are commanded for the Sake of *Decency* and *Order* in the Service

Service of GOD; and that the Articles of Religion, the Laws of our Church require to be subscrib'd, were compos'd and ratify'd on no other Design, but for *avoiding Diversity of Opinions, and establishing Consent in true Religion.*

Now after long Experience, we know these Purposes have not been answer'd with all desirable Success. The Appointment of human Rites in our *Church of England Worship*, has been Matter of Offence to many scrupulous Protestants, as an Infringement of the *Liberty wherewith Christ has made them free.* And the Subscription to Articles of human Composition, being made a Condition of ministering in our Communion, has made it narrower, than all, who lay the ill Tendency of our Divisions to Heart, would be willing to see. I do not dispute, but that there is enough of Infirmary on the other Side.

BUT since it proves to be thus, and as Things stand, we know not how to help it; might it not be well, if the Power, which we say is sufficient to appoint, would remove the Things, which occasion the Dissentions of Protestants, and stop the Complaints, the Troubles and Offences which have arisen from them on all Sides. For such a Condescension to erroneous Christians, St. Paul has left several pressing Persuasions. *Let us not there-* Rom. xiv.
13, 14, 15:

fore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, That no Man put a Stumbling-block, or an Occasion to fall in his Brother's Way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any Thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy Brother be grieved with thy Meats now walkest thou not charitably, destroy not him
 Ver. 21. with thy Meat for whom Christ died. It is good neither to eat Flesh, nor to drink Wine, nor to do any Thing, whereby thy Brother stumbleth, or is
 Rom. xv. 12. offended, or is made weak. We therefore that are strong ought to bear the Infirmities of the Weak,
 1 Cor. viii. and not to please ourselves; let every one please his
 12, 13. Neighbour for his good to Edification. But when ye sin so against the Brethren, and wound their weak Conscience, ye sin against Christ; wherefore if Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Flesh, while the World standeth, lest I make my
 1 Cor. ix. 22. Brother to offend. To the Weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the Weak; I am made all Things to all Men, that I might by all means save some.

Now according to these Resolutions of St. Paul, free and otherwise harmless Things are to be conceded to weak and erroneous Christians. But the Abatement and Alterations of all the Things at which dissenting Protestants take Offence, are as much in the Power and Disposal of publick Authority in our Nation,

Nation, as the particular Matters St. Paul mentions, are, or could be in the Power of private Christians. And if publick Authority be not exempt from all Regard to Charity, the Inference is easy to be apprehended.

First, As to the Ceremonies in the Church of England; Does the Vindication of the Privilege to appoint indifferent Things counter-vail for all the Evils of Division, the Doubts, the Complaints, the Dissentions, the intestine Heats and Controversies which, we see, have attended it? Or, is the Power to command indifferent Things for Order and outward Uniformity, to be insisted on with inflexible Strictness, when the Inconveniences following it, appear to be much greater, than the Benefits arising from such particular Restrictions? Or, are the Blessings of Peace, and the Enlargement of our Communion, less valuable, than the Maintenance of one particular Set of indifferent, though well-intended Customs?

BESIDE the Generosity of employing a sure and undoubted Right, in the Way of Charity, to take off the Scruples, and release the Consciences of many from the Mischiefs and Guilt of Separation. It stands to Reason, that the more our Communion is enlarg'd, the stronger it will be against the Attempts

tempts of *Papists*, and their infatuated Agents among ourselves to subvert the PROTESTANT ESTABLISHMENT. If this Expedient for enlarging the Communion of our Church, would at first only bring in some of the most moderate of the dissenting Protestants; that is a Thing not to be despis'd. If the most tenacious and prejudic'd Dissenters should stand out after some Concessions of this Sort, which satisfy'd the wisest of them. Yet if all their Demands go no further, as indeed they cannot under this Head, than to ask, That the Things the Power of Men hath mix'd with religious Worship, the Power of Men should, as it justly may, separate from religious Worship again. Why, I desire to know, is such a Thing above being granted! when the Peace and Security of a Christian Nation shew it to be advisable?

I HAVE often heard it objected, That Alterations from the present Modes of our Worship, would give Offence and Scandal to many of our own Communion. I answer, Not upon *Church of England* Principles; for, according to the *Church of England*, all such Things are only binding, as they are commanded; but if Use and Custom have taught many among ourselves to place a Degree of Religion in them, which is not by any Means

Means due to them. Then the Use of our Ceremonies has had one ill Effect on many among ourselves, and has not been innocent from the Suspicion of Superstition among the People of our own Communion.

BUT still there might be no Wrong or Violence done to those, who are suppos'd to have an injudicious, and unreasonable Esteem of these positive Rights ; if they should cease to be commanded by Authority. When the Relaxation or non-enjoying of them, might leave any Ministers and People, free to use them, or forbear them, as they would think best. And I do not see what Confusion this Liberty would introduce, more than may be seen in most Churches of the Kingdom while our *Uniformity* stands enacted.

Secondly, If the Establishment of a publick Form of Prayer, be for the Benefit and Edification of GOD'S CHURCH, why should not the Power to provide for that End, be as universally extended as is possible. If such a Method of Agreement, as was debated after the Restoration, was to be sincerely tried for clearing the National Liturgy from all conceivable Exceptions. It would have a Commendation, which is now deny'd to it, because we see it is not universally comply'd with. Were all such Things and Expressions

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to be left out and alter'd, which give Offence, their Amendments would stop, where no more Scruples could be alledg'd. And that must end in a Form so near to Scripture in pure Scripture Doctrines and in Scripture Terms, that all who believe the Scripture could not but agree to use every Part of it. And for the Satisfaction of those who hold it unlawful to be confin'd only to a set Form of Prayer in publick Worship, it might be provided, that beside the publick Form, they should be free to deliver a Prayer of their own, before and after Sermon, which many of our Church Clergy do now without any legal Direction.

If lastly, SUBSCRIPTION to our Articles means only to establish Consent in true Religion, and has no design to teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men: As indeed our Church consistently with itself cannot pretend to do, having disclaim'd all pretence to infallibility. Why then should our particular Account of the Christian Religion be unalterable? We cannot deny, but the Scripture is a perfect Rule of Faith without it, and sufficient to Guide those to Heaven, who may not see the Connexion nor perhaps the Truth of every Proposition in our Articles. And why should not a Subscription to the
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the Truth of every Proposition in our *Articles*. And why should not a Subscription to the Truth of the whole Bible, which is the unquestionable Standard of Orthodoxy among all Protestants, be admitted as sufficient Satisfaction of a Man's Consent in true Religion, without requiring his Consent to Articles of human Composition, which, as we are not infallible, we cannot aver to be the necessary Profession of a true Christian. And a Subscription declaring a stedfast Faith in the Truth and Perfection of the Bible, answers all that GOD has requir'd to be believ'd and profess'd to Salvation. And he that subscribes to Scripture, subscribes to all and every Thing, our Church would be thought to hold in the *Thirty-nine Articles*. And I cannot understand, why that Faith which will be accepted of GOD for Heaven, should not be accepted by Men, as a sufficient Qualification for Church Communion.

Now, to prevent a deal of Declamation upon these Proposals for the Peace and Security of the *Reformed Church of England*, from the inexhaustable Topics of *Enthusiam* and *Fanaticism*; I will shew you, that these were the Sentiments of B^r *Stillingfleet*, and Mr. *Chillingworth*, whom none of the hot Men can pretend to censure as *Enthusiasts* or *Fanatics*. * Were we so happy, but to take off Things granted unnecessary by

* *Irenicum*.
Book I.
c. 6. Sect.
6.

all, and suspected by many, and judg'd unlawful by some; and to make nothing the Bonds of our Communion, but what Christ hath done, viz. One Faith, one Baptism, &c. allowing a liberty for Matters of Indifferency, and bearing with the Weakness of those, who cannot bear Things which others account lawful, we might indeed be restor'd to a primitive Lustre far sooner, than by surbishing up some antiquated Ceremonies, which can derive their Pedigree no higher, than from some ancient Custom and Tradition. A little after he goes on, And for publick Forms of divine-Service, such of all Things, certainly, should be so compos'd, as to be the least subject to any Scruple from any Persons whatsoever; being on Purpose compos'd for the declaring Mens Unity and Consent in their publick Worship. And those who are the most addicted to any one Form, can never plead it unlawful to amend it; whereas others may, that it is not lawful or convenient, at least to use it without such Alterations. And therefore were there that Spirit of mutual Condescension, which was most certainly in Ecclesiâ primo primitivâ, as Gratian somewhere speaks, in the first and truly primitive Church in the Apostles Time; our Breaches, as to this Thing too, might soon be clos'd up, and the Voice of Schism be heard among us no more.

THE great Man concludes this Section with these remarkable Words: It cannot but be
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looked upon as a Token of GOD's severe Displeasure against us, if any, though unreasonable Proposals of Peace between Us and the Papists should meet with such Entertainment among many; and yet any fair Offers of Union and Accommodation among ourselves, be so coldly embraced and entertained. The Mischiefs and dangerous Tendency of that Infatuation we have abundantly known, and it cannot soon be forgotten, how near it brought us to the Brink of Ruin.

As to Subscriptions of human Confessions of Faith, and human Articles of Religion, that it is just and right upon Protestant Principles to remove all Cause of Uneasiness in that Respect, I own, *Chillingworth's* Judgment seems to me to be unanswerable.

THIS presumptuous imposing of the Senses of Men on the Words of GOD, the special Senses of Men upon the general Words of GOD, and laying them upon Mens Consciences together, under the equal Penalty of Death and Damnation; this vain Conceit, that we can speak of the Things of GOD, better than in the Words of GOD: This deifying our own Interpretations, and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the Word of GOD from that Latitude and Generality, and the Understanding of Men from that Liberty, wherein CHRIST and the Apostles left them, is, and hath been the only Fountain of all the Schisms of the Church, and that which makes them immortal;

nal; the common Incendiary of Christendom, and that which tears into pieces, not the Coat, but the Bowels; and Members of CHRIST; *Ridente Turcà nee dolente Judæo*. Take away these Walls of Separation, and all will quickly be one. Take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of Men for not subscribing to the Words of Men, as the Words of GOD; Require of Christians only to believe CHRIST, and to call no Man Master but him only; Let those leave claiming Infallibility, who have no Title to it; and let them that in their Words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their Actions. In a Word, Take away Tyranny, which is the Devil's Instrument to support Errors, and Superstitions, and Impieties, in the several Parts of the World, which could not otherwise long withstand the Power of Truth; I say, Take away Tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full Liberty of captivating their Understanding to Scripture only, and as Rivers when they have a free Passage, run all to the Ocean; so it may well be hoped, by GOD's Blessing, that universal Liberty thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to Truth and Unity. — These Thoughts of Peace (I am persuaded) may come from the GOD of Peace, and to his Blessing I commend them.

F I N I S